In addition, Air India has recommended thrice weekly operations to Frankfurt w.e.f. December, 2002.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) At present, Hyderabad Airport is not equipped to handle B747 aircraft which are being deployed by Air India to operate its services to USA. However, Air India serves the Hyderabad-US West Coast market through code share flights over the Pacific. Pssengers can travel between Hyderabad and Singapore on Air India's own direct services as also on Air India's code share services with Silk Air, with convenient connections onward to the US West Coast and on Air India's code share flights with Singapore on the Singapore/ Los Angeles sector. Air India can also carry passengers between Hyderabad and Los Angeles over Kuala Lumpur on its code share on Malayasia Airlines Flights Hyderabad-Kuala Lumpur-Los Angeles sector.

Modernisation of Amritsar Airport

2636. SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the status of Amritsar Airport at present;

(b) whether Government propose to modernise Amritsar Airport at par with International Airports; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the amount of funds spent so far on this and the funds to be allocated for the said project in the Tenth Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) At present, Amritsar airport has runway length of 9150 feet. Customs and Immigration facilities are available there for operation of International flights. Terminal building can handle 200 passengers, and apron can accommodate two AB - 320 and one B - 737 aircraft. Airport is

equipped with navigational aids like DVOR, NDB, ILS, VHF and HF facilities.

(b) and (c) An amount of Rs. 79.27 crore have been approved for taking up major works of construction of New Terminal Building, construction of Cargo complex, re-surfacing of existing main runway, taxi tracks, extension of main runway to 10790 feet, construction of apron, new Technical Block cum control tower, new fire station etc. Rs. 20.42 crore have been spent on above works till February 2003. There is a provision of Rs. 35 crore for upgradation of Amritsar airport in the Tenth Five Year Plan.

Global aviation alliance by Air India

2637. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Air India has plans to join a global aviation alliance in the near future;

(b) In what manner this alliance will benefit the national carrier; and

(c) the basis on which Government are going to finalise the alliance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) to (c) Air India has been contemplating joining one of the global alliances to achieve its strategic objectives as it could be advantageous to Air India's long term operational strategy, its route network its approach to emerging markets, fleet plan and schedule of aircraft acquisition. The process of evaluating the pros and cons of joining the particular alliance is underway.

Projects on air connectivity in NER

2638. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) The status of the declaration made by Hon'ble Prime Minister